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# EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Friday, April 25, 2014

## \*\*\* DAILY HOT LIST \*\*\*

### Federal study: Asbestos exposure okay for short term at Alexandria apartment complex

**WASHINGTON POST** The amount of airborne asbestos at Alexandria's Hunting Point apartments is not enough to harm people who breathe it for weeks or months, a federal study has concluded, but there is not enough data to make long-term predictions. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, examined dust and air samples that the Environmental Protection Agency collected at the 530-unit towers over the past five months. Its [letter to the EPA](#) this week said that while concentrations of asbestos in the air "do not appear to be high enough to harm the health of people who breathe this air for relatively short periods of time . . . uncertainties described above make it difficult to say there is no long-term risk from exposures to low levels of asbestos that might remain in the building." The [EPA issued a rare stop-work order](#) on renovations at the apartment complex this month after inspectors discovered asbestos in the floors, doors and windows and found that work crews were not taking legally required precautions. The renovations have been going on since last summer, when a new owner bought the buildings from the Virginia Department of Transportation and began upgrading windows, floors, pipes and other basic infrastructure. After multiple unresolved complaints from residents to the landlord, the city and the state, a resident called the EPA, which sent in teams of investigators. Renovations are still on hold. The EPA plans to meet Monday with residents to discuss the results of the sampling and explain its next steps. Stefanie Ackerman, a Hunting Point resident who has a 3-month-old child, said she feels better after reading the toxic-substances agency's letter but has "mixed feelings" about the safety of the apartments. Ackerman, a George Washington University law student, is also exploring whether she and her fellow tenants should sue over the asbestos exposure.

### ER symptoms 'consistent' with MCHM exposure

**CHARLESTON GAZETTE** Hundreds of West Virginia residents who sought emergency-room care in January were treated for symptoms that were "consistent" with exposure to MCHM, the primary chemical that leaked from the Freedom Industries tank farm into the region's Elk River drinking-water supply, according to a review made public Wednesday. The review, which examined medical charts from area hospitals, also showed that the most common

way injured residents were exposed to the chemical was through skin contact while bathing, showering or washing hands — routes not considered in the 1-part-per-million “screening level” touted as safe by state and federal officials. “There is every reason to believe from these data that hundreds of people, if not more, were directly affected by exposure to MCHM-contaminated water,” said Richard Denison, an Environmental Defense Fund scientist who has closely followed the leak and its impacts. “The state seems intent on minimizing any connection, while the data strongly suggest there is one.” Department of Health and Human Resources officials released the medical chart data just a day after Kanawha-Charleston Health Department Director Rahul Gupta made public a different analysis of reports from doctor’s offices that projected roughly 100,000 people in the region likely experienced symptoms, with the vast majority never seeking any medical attention. Gupta has said the review of hospital charts “grossly underestimates” the true public health effects of the leak, which contaminated the drinking-water supply for 300,000 residents in a nine-county area around Charleston. The report released by the DHHR continued to downplay the leak’s impacts on public health, saying that most people who visited emergency rooms had symptoms that were “mild and resolved with no treatment.” It cited intravenous fluids after episodes of vomiting or diarrhea and medications for nausea or itching as examples.

### **More inspections taking place at Freedom chemical leak site**

**CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL** One of the federal agencies investigating the Freedom Industries chemical leak started collecting more evidence from the Elk River site Thursday. The Chemical Safety Board’s collection of evidence included cutting large chunks from several tanks at the site. “(Thursday), workers are cutting doors into the tank so that it is no longer a confined space,” said Kelley Gillenwater, state Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman. “After that, the CSB will move forward with its field testing.” The CSB came to West Virginia a few days after state officials discovered thousands of gallons of MCHM and other chemicals leaking from Tank 396 into the Elk River. The agency announced it would investigate the incident after the leaked chemical had overwhelmed the nearby water treatment facility and contaminated tap water for more than 15 percent of the state’s population. The CSB’s inquiry into the chemical leak is its third investigation of a chemical related disaster in the Kanawha Valley since 2008. It issued reports calling for reforms focused on better public awareness following the 2008 fatal explosion at the Bayer CropScience facility in Institute and another fatal incident at the DuPont facility in Belle in 2010. “The CSB’s previous recommendations aimed at empowering a government agency to determine just what posed a high hazard,” CSB Chairman Rafael Moure-Eraso told a congressional committee in a February special hearing about the leak.

### **Rep. Bill Shuster sets hearing about EPA rules in Altoona**

**CHAMBERSBURG PUBLIC OPINION** Altoona -- U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Hollidaysburg, will convene a field hearing at 9 a.m. on Monday in his backyard about the potential impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to regulate waters and wet areas. The Obama administration has proposed clarifying the Clean Waters Act to apply to waters that are not navigable. Shuster has called it an EPA “power grab.” The hearing will also consider the effects of tightened Army Corps permitting requirements for

stream crossings of natural gas collector lines constructed in Pennsylvania. Officials representing the Marcellus Shale Coalition, energy companies, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Pennsylvania Builders Association and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau are scheduled to testify. Shuster chairs the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and will chair its hearing in Ballroom 1 of the Blair County Convention Center. The hearing comes less than a month before the GOP primary in which Shuster faces a challenge from two fellow Republicans, Art Halvorson and Travis Schooley, both of whom claim to be more conservative than Shuster. A series of debates lead up to the primary.

## **Water not tainted by Radford Army Ammunition Plant, study says**

**ROANOKE TIMES** After a yearlong investigation, a federal agency reported on Wednesday that residents living around the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, ranked as the largest toxic emitter in Virginia, need not worry about finding chemicals in their drinking water. The 103-page report was prepared in response to concerns by several environmental groups which have feared for years that the plant's hazardous waste — the leftovers of making ammunition that were dumped on the plant's sprawling grounds decades ago, before current environmental regulations took effect — may have found its way into the wells of nearby homes. Studies over the years by the Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Quality have found little evidence of contaminated drinking water. Wednesday's report by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, an arm of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, relied heavily on the same data used in previous investigations and again came to the same conclusion.

## **EPA declined in innovation last year -- study**

**GREENWIRE U.S.** EPA is one of the more innovative federal agencies but saw its progress slow last year, according to a study released today by the Partnership for Public Service. The partnership, a nonprofit group that researches how to improve the federal government, ranked EPA fifth among large agencies, tying with the Navy. NASA was ranked No. 1 among large agencies, holding onto its crown for the fourth straight year. EPA's "innovation score" was 61.6 points for 2013, a drop of 4.5 points from the prior year. NASA's score was 76 points last year, a decline of 0.5 from 2012. Categorized as a small agency by the partnership, the Surface Transportation Board earned the highest score among all agencies, with 83.9 points. The partnership, along with Deloitte and Hay Group, based its analysis on certain questions from a survey of federal employees used each year for its "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" report. The analysis found that 90 percent of government workers are looking for ways to improve their job performance but only 54.7 percent feel that they are encouraged to do so. In addition, only about a third of federal employees feel their agencies reward innovation on the job. The partnership found the governmentwide innovation score dropped again in 2013 to 59.4 points, a fall of 2.1. That's the lowest score since 2010, when the group began measuring agency innovation, which has fallen year after year. Other agencies in the energy and environmental world saw their innovation scores drop, too. The Interior Department was ranked No. 9 among large agencies with a score of 60.2 for last year, a drop of 3 points from 2012.

## **Study links drought, global warming**

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** WASHINGTON — While researchers have sometimes connected weather extremes to man-made global warming, usually it's not done in real time. Now a study is asserting a link between climate change and both the intensifying California drought and the polar vortex blamed for a harsh winter that mercifully has just ended in many places. The Utah State University scientists involved in the study say they hope what they found can help them predict the next big weird winter. Outside scientists, such as Katharine Hayhoe at Texas Tech University, are calling this study promising but not quite proven as it pushes the boundaries in "one of the hottest topics in climate science today." The United States just came out of a two-faced winter — bitter cold and snowy in the Midwest and East, warm and severely dry in the West. The latest U.S. drought monitor says 100 percent of California is in an official drought. The new study blames an unusual "dipole," a combination of a strong Western high pressure ridge and deep Great Lakes low pressure trough. That dipole is linked to a recently found precursor to El Nino, the world-weather changing phenomenon. And that precursor itself seems amplified by a build-up of heat-trapping greenhouse gases, the study says. It's like a complex game of weather dominos that starts with cold water off China and ends with a devastating drought and memorable winter in the United States, said study author Simon Wang, a Utah State University climate scientist. Wang was looking at colder water off China as a precursor to an El Nino. The colder water there triggers westerly winds in the tropical Pacific. Those westerly winds persist for several months and eventually push warmed up water and air to the central Pacific where an El Nino forms, Wang said

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## **PENNSYLVANIA**

### **PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE**

Dreaded Asian carp may be on Lake Erie doorstep ZANESVILLE, Ohio -- As it cuts a squiggly track through the southeast Ohio hill country, the Muskingum River might seem like an unlikely battlefield in the war to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes, but the results of a recent study indicate these dreaded invaders could be present near there and pushing north toward a gateway to the Lake Erie watershed. Multiple water samples taken from the Muskingum River last fall carried the environmental signature of bighead carp, an invasive species threatening the ecosystem of the Great Lakes. A report released Friday by the Nature Conservancy -- in conjunction with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and researchers from Central Michigan University -- indicated 10 of the 222 samples from the river tested positive for bighead carp eDNA. Asian carp have been established in the Ohio River for more than a decade, but these eDNA results indicate the fish could be present in the Muskingum some 80 miles north of where the Muskingum joins the Ohio at Marietta.

### **PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW**

Utica shale gas wells in Ohio dismay EQT EQT Corp. said on Thursday that it has had some disappointing results from wells at the edge of the Utica shale in Ohio and will stop drilling in

the formation while it evaluates its prospects. EQT's decision follows Antero Resources Corp.'s reduction 10 days earlier in what it predicts to get from wells in a similar area on the western edge of the play. The Utica shale is viewed as the next front for gas drillers who benefited from booming production in the Marcellus shale and are looking to expand to other promising plays. "The first wells we drilled were not where they needed to be," Steve Schlotterbeck, an executive vice president at EQT, said during a conference call discussing an otherwise successful quarter for the Downtown company. EQT reported its production from Marcellus wells increased by 30 percent in the January-March quarter. That contributed to a 92 percent increase in net income to \$192.2 million, or \$1.26 per share, compared with \$100.3 million, or \$0.66 per share, in the same period a year ago.

### **STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA**

Baker Hughes phasing in full disclosure of fracking fluid In Pennsylvania, companies are required to publicly disclose the chemicals they use for hydraulic fracturing, but they are allowed to make exceptions for "trade secrets." EnergyWire reports that Baker Hughes, a major service company for the oil and natural gas industry, has quietly implemented a new policy to disclose the ingredients in its fracking fluid — no exceptions. The full recipes will be posted to the website FracFocus.org which has become a national clearinghouse for information about fracking chemicals. According to the company's website, Baker Hughes says it will help achieve "a balance that increases public trust while encouraging commercial innovation."

Winter price spikes drive 50K Pa. electric customers back to local suppliers Electricity customers in Pennsylvania on variable rate plans suffered from sticker shock this winter when temperatures plunged and prices spiked. That's driven at least 50,000 customers back to their local utilities since early March, according to the state Public Utility Commission. Rather than shopping around for electric suppliers, those customers are letting geography choose for them,...

### **ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL**

Saucon Valley, Lehigh recognized for commitment to environment On a snowy morning in late December, members of the Sanctuary Committee at Saucon Valley Country Club conducted their annual Christmas bird count. They hired a naturalist, brought their kids and viewed several bald eagles. Jim Roney, Saucon Valley's director of golf courses and grounds, called the day an annual favorite among Saucon's membership. He also said it underscored the club's environmental commitment, both on course and off. Saucon Valley and Lehigh Country Club this year are among U.S. courses recognized for environmental excellence by Audubon International. Both clubs have been recertified as Audubon cooperative sanctuaries, joining a list of 870 courses worldwide, including 29 in Pennsylvania. To be certified as an Audubon cooperative sanctuary, golf courses must demonstrate a commitment to environmental planning, wildlife habitat management, chemical-use reduction and water-quality management and conservation. Three regional public courses (Golden Oaks, Jack Frost National and Lederach) are among those certified, with Golden Oaks being recognized since 2000. The program, part of Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf, is designed to help golf courses protect the environment, on and off property, while preserving the game's natural feel. Golf's reputation as an environmental negative is something the game has struggled with for years, based on land, water and chemical use, misuse or overuse. In 1991, Audubon International began its Cooperative Sanctuary Program with the U.S. Golf Association. Audubon International

compiled a list of six environmental components that courses should address.

### **CHAMBERSBURG PUBLIC OPINION**

Rep. Bill Shuster sets hearing about EPA rules in Altoona Altoona -- U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Hollidaysburg, will convene a field hearing at 9 a.m. on Monday in his backyard about the potential impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to regulate waters and wet areas. The Obama administration has proposed clarifying the Clean Waters Act to apply to waters that are not navigable. Shuster has called it an EPA "power grab." The hearing will also consider the effects of tightened Army Corps permitting requirements for stream crossings of natural gas collector lines constructed in Pennsylvania. Officials representing the Marcellus Shale Coalition, energy companies, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Pennsylvania Builders Association and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau are scheduled to testify. Shuster chairs the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and will chair its hearing in Ballroom 1 of the Blair County Convention Center. The hearing comes less than a month before the GOP primary in which Shuster faces a challenge from two fellow Republicans, Art Halvorson and Travis Schooley, both of whom claim to be more conservative than Shuster. A series of debates lead up to the primary.

### **HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS**

Lebanon County group plans strategies to stop natural gas pipeline Douglas Weaber was not happy when a land agent showed up at his door two weeks ago asking to survey his 12 acres of pasture and woodland in South Londonderry Township for a proposed natural gas pipeline. "I was rude at first," he said. "I wouldn't let him in. We stood talking in the rain." Weaber eventually relented to allow the survey, but still feels about the pipeline, "I don't want it. No way. They can keep their money." Weaber was among about 40 Lebanon County residents who came to a quickly organized meeting Thursday evening to talk about ways to stop the proposed Central Penn South line, part of the 178-mile Atlantic Sunrise pipeline proposed by Oklahoma-based Williams Partners. The line would travel through 27 miles of Lebanon County in South Londonderry, South Annville, North Annville, East Hanover and Union Townships. It would connect to Lancaster County on the south and Schuylkill County on the north. The intent is to bring natural gas from the Marcellus shale regions to markets up and down the east coast. It will connect to the Transco pipeline which runs from New York City to Texas. Williams Partners owns more than 10,000 miles of pipeline in the United States, according to its website. The Lebanon County pipe will be 42 inches wide and carry a pressure of 1200 to 1500 psi. Michael Shearer was also approached by Williams Partners about surveying his land on Mount Pleasant Road in South Londonderry Township. He said he has several worries: "The health and safety of my family, the possibility of using eminent domain to obtain easements, and general environmental concerns." Residents said they were concerned about explosions, water contamination, wetlands, and sinkholes. The meeting led by Michael Schroeder and Ann Pinca was designed to follow the lead of Lancaster County, where a town hall meeting on the pipeline drew 200 people and led to a petition now signed by 8,000, according to Malinda Clatterbuck, who organized the Lancaster County group. Lebanon County Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz, who attended the meeting, said the proposed pipeline is one of three currently being considered in Lebanon County. Sunoco Logistics wants to put in a line carrying ethane, butane and propane next to the oil line it already has, she said. UGI also wants to put in a line in the northeast part of the county. Shearer said his property is already close to the Sunoco pipeline, and he knows

several people who have experienced leaks from that line onto their properties. Litz advised the group to also consider ways to make the Williams Partners pipeline safer if it does go in. She had the county planning department develop an ordinance which she distributed to the affected municipalities to regulate the pipeline and make sure it remains a good distance from structures. Williams Partners has sent a pre-filing request to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. They plan to hold open house meetings about the project in May and June, and apply for permission to build by early 2015. Construction would begin in 2016 and be complete by 2017, according to information provided to the county commissioners in February.

### **LANSDALE REPORTER**

Editorial: Gas industry has way too much leeway in Pa. If you want to get a sense of the extent to which the corporate tail wags the Pennsylvania dog, there is no better example than the way the state and a natural gas company reacted in the immediate aftermath of a February well explosion that killed a 27-year-old worker and then continued to burn for days. What had happened was fairly amazing, according to StateImpact, a reporting project of National Public Radio member stations. After the gas well operated by Chevron blew up on Feb. 11 in Greene County, it didn't take long for an emergency crew from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to show up on the scene. After all, as the arbiter of all things environmental in the state, and with natural gas drilling posing the greatest threat to the state's environment, DEP would certainly stay poised to respond to such a development as fast as possible.

### **POCONO RECORD**

Key methane measure is important Conflicting information over methane emissions from Pennsylvania gas well sites should be of concern to all citizens. Scientists who measured emissions by flying over natural gas drilling sites in southwestern Pennsylvania found methane at levels 100 to 1,000 times higher than regulators from the federal Environmental Protection Agency estimated earlier. The specially equipped plane found emissions as high as 34 grams of methane per second on average at several well pads in the Marcellus shale formation. Earlier EPA estimates suggested the drilling releases between 0.04 grams and 0.30 grams of methane per second. That is a serious discrepancy, and worrisome, since methane is a primary culprit in global warming. Carbon dioxide released through fossil fuel combustion — gas-powered vehicles, open fires and the like — gets much of the blame. But methane is 20 to 30 times more potent than CO2 at trapping heat in Earth's atmosphere. The Obama administration has been working with dairy farmers to reduce agriculture-related methane emissions, and in March announced a Biogas and Energy Roadmap that resulted from cooperative work by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy's Sustainability Council and the USDA. The National Milk Producers Federation recently endorsed the plan.

### **WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE**

Susquehanna Warrior Trail receives grants Susquehanna Warrior Trail Council has received two \$40,000 grants that pave the way for further trail construction. Berwick Health and Wellness Fund and Luzerne County each contributed \$40,000, according to Lance Kittelson, council president. The \$80,000 provides the matching funds needed to secure a \$320,000 new-trail construction grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. "We expect that this will allow us to build at least four more miles of trail and two trail heads. Our work now begins on construction administrative prerequisites," he said. The Susquehanna

Warrior Trail runs north from Berwick to the Garden Drive-In at Hunlock Creek. The master plan calls for the trail, now at 11 miles, to run north into Edwardsville where it will connect with an existing trail on the Wyoming Valley levee system. As the trail runs through Plymouth Township, it will tie in to the Avondale Mine Disaster site. That area is being cleaned up by a cooperative effort spearheaded by the Plymouth Historical Society.

### **WILLIAMSPORT SUN GAZETTE**

Hard winter creates higher nutrient counts WELLSBORO - The brutal cold this past winter did more than slow the advent of spring, it also created a prime situation for the growth of nutrients from the borough's sewage treatment plant.

### **ASSOCIATED PRESS (PA)**

Oil and gas supplier Baker Hughes says it will list all fracking fluids A major supplier to the oil and gas industry says it will begin disclosing 100 percent of the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing fluid, with no exemptions for trade secrets. The move by Baker Hughes of Houston is a shift for a major firm; it's unclear whether others will follow suit. The oil and gas industry has said the fracking chemicals are disclosed at tens of thousands of wells, but environmental and health groups and government regulators say a loophole that allows companies to hide chemical "trade secrets" has been a major problem. A statement on the Baker Hughes website said the company believes it's possible to disclose 100 percent "of the chemical ingredients we use in hydraulic fracturing fluids without compromising our formulations" to increase public trust. "This is really good news. It's a step in the right direction," said Dr. Bernard Goldstein, the former dean of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health. "One hopes that the entire industry goes along with it."

Pa. township approves permits for airport drilling IMPERIAL, Pa. (AP) — Supervisors in a western Pennsylvania township have approved permits for a company to drill for natural gas at Pittsburgh International Airport with almost two dozen conditions. Findley Township supervisors voted 2-1 to approve the conditional use permits but included noise and light disturbance limits, requirements for flaggers and safety vehicles at entrances to the site, a ban on injection wells and other caveats. A proposal to require one well pad moved further away from a residential development was rejected. Consol Energy Inc. hopes to start drilling this year. Allegheny county officials say the deal could generate more than \$500 million in royalties over the next few decades. After the vote, company president Nick DeIuliis vowed that the project would be a model of safe and responsible natural gas development.

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## WASHINGTON, D.C.

### **WASHINGTON POST**

Federal study: Asbestos exposure okay for short term at Alexandria apartment complex The amount of airborne asbestos at Alexandria's Hunting Point apartments is not enough to harm people who breathe it for weeks or months, a federal study has concluded, but there is not enough data to make long-term predictions. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, examined dust and air samples

that the Environmental Protection Agency collected at the 530-unit towers over the past five months. Its letter to the EPA this week said that while concentrations of asbestos in the air “do not appear to be high enough to harm the health of people who breathe this air for relatively short periods of time . . . uncertainties described above make it difficult to say there is no long-term risk from exposures to low levels of asbestos that might remain in the building.” The EPA issued a rare stop-work order on renovations at the apartment complex this month after inspectors discovered asbestos in the floors, doors and windows and found that work crews were not taking legally required precautions. The renovations have been going on since last summer, when a new owner bought the buildings from the Virginia Department of Transportation and began upgrading windows, floors, pipes and other basic infrastructure. After multiple unresolved complaints from residents to the landlord, the city and the state, a resident called the EPA, which sent in teams of investigators. Renovations are still on hold. The EPA plans to meet Monday with residents to discuss the results of the sampling and explain its next steps. Stefanie Ackerman, a Hunting Point resident who has a 3-month-old child, said she feels better after reading the toxic-substances agency’s letter but has “mixed feelings” about the safety of the apartments. Ackerman, a George Washington University law student, is also exploring whether she and her fellow tenants should sue over the asbestos exposure.

### **WASHINGTON TIMES**

EDITORIAL: Osprey gives Maryland the bird The osprey is a noble bird of prey that not so long ago was headed toward extinction. Ospreys are making a comeback under federal protection. Killing one is a federal and usually a state crime, punishable by stiff fines and a long stay in prison. In Maryland, however, harassing ospreys has become something of a sport for certain state officials. Near Annapolis, an osprey found a pole with a commanding view of the Chesapeake Bay and the abundant fish on which to feed. The bird, happy with his good fortune, made the pole its home, angering the officious at the Maryland Transportation Authority. The bird, which probably has only one use for forms but does not live in a birdcage, after all, had apparently failed to apply for a permit. The osprey further offended a traffic camera — the kind that broadcasts traffic conditions, not the sort that generates revenue — and pecked at the machine when it moved

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## **DELAWARE**

### **WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL**

Groups seek action on compost plant odors Civic group leaders and residents from New Castle and South Wilmington to Brandywine Hundred leveled a new round of complaints about odors from an industrial scale composting plant near the Port of Wilmington late Wednesday. The objections came hours after the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control amended and toughened a penalty order issued against the company last year. Under the new order, DNREC doubled to \$20,000 the amount that Peninsula Compost LLC must spend on consulting services to improve environmental compliance at its operation off Christiana Avenue near Terminal Avenue, and provide other community services, atop a \$15,000 fine. "One of the things I'm requiring is that they significantly increase the amount they're spending on monitoring

and, making sure they have better data on the air impacts and other impacts they've had over the years," said DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara. Peninsula opened in 2009 with a permit to compost up to 160,000 tons of materials a year using a high-tech, rapid composting method using special fabric covers for part of the process. Food wastes, yard waste, animal bedding and other woody wastes and raw materials come in from Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and New York City, including tons of spoiled fruit from the Port of Wilmington. Odor complaints, and charges of excessive stockpiling, began to accumulate not long after operations began, however.

### **DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE**

Prime Hook begins monofilament fishing line collections Recently, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge celebrated its 50th Anniversary and this year they have partnered with Friends of Prime Hook and placed four monofilament collection containers in the following locations: Parking area at Fowler Beach Road bridge over Slaughter Canal; Public access area at the Petersfield Ditch water control structure, Route 16; Fleetwood Pond boat ramp; Refuge Headquarters boat ramp. Every day, improperly discarded monofilament fishing line causes devastating problems for marine life and the environment. Marine mammals, sea turtles, fish and birds become injured from entanglements, or might ingest the line, often dying as a result. Human divers and swimmers are also at risk from entanglements and the line can also damage boat propellers. The goals of the nonprofit Friends of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge are to:

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## **WEST VIRGINIA**

### **CHARLESTON GAZETTE**

ER symptoms 'consistent' with MCHM exposure Hundreds of West Virginia residents who sought emergency-room care in January were treated for symptoms that were "consistent" with exposure to MCHM, the primary chemical that leaked from the Freedom Industries tank farm into the region's Elk River drinking-water supply, according to a review made public Wednesday. The review, which examined medical charts from area hospitals, also showed that the most common way injured residents were exposed to the chemical was through skin contact while bathing, showering or washing hands — routes not considered in the 1-part-per-million "screening level" touted as safe by state and federal officials. "There is every reason to believe from these data that hundreds of people, if not more, were directly affected by exposure to MCHM-contaminated water," said Richard Denison, an Environmental Defense Fund scientist who has closely followed the leak and its impacts. "The state seems intent on minimizing any connection, while the data strongly suggest there is one." Department of Health and Human Resources officials released the medical chart data just a day after Kanawha-Charleston Health Department Director Rahul Gupta made public a different analysis of reports from doctor's offices that projected roughly 100,000 people in the region likely experienced symptoms, with the vast majority never seeking any medical attention. Gupta has said the review of hospital charts "grossly underestimates" the true public health effects of the leak, which contaminated the drinking-water supply for 300,000 residents in a nine-county area around Charleston. The report released by the DHHR continued to downplay the leak's impacts on public health, saying that most people who visited emergency rooms had symptoms that were "mild and resolved with no

treatment.” It cited intravenous fluids after episodes of vomiting or diarrhea and medications for nausea or itching as examples.

New River Gorge fire 90 percent contained GLEN JEAN, W.Va. – Firefighting crews have contained 90 percent of a fire that’s burning in the New River Gorge National River.

### **CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL**

More inspections taking place at Freedom chemical leak site One of the federal agencies investigating the Freedom Industries chemical leak started collecting more evidence from the Elk River site Thursday. The Chemical Safety Board’s collection of evidence included cutting large chunks from several tanks at the site. “(Thursday), workers are cutting doors into the tank so that it is no longer a confined space,” said Kelley Gillenwater, state Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman. “After that, the CSB will move forward with its field testing.” The CSB came to West Virginia a few days after state officials discovered thousands of gallons of MCHM and other chemicals leaking from Tank 396 into the Elk River. The agency announced it would investigate the incident after the leaked chemical had overwhelmed the nearby water treatment facility and contaminated tap water for more than 15 percent of the state’s population. The CSB’s inquiry into the chemical leak is its third investigation of a chemical related disaster in the Kanawha Valley since 2008. It issued reports calling for reforms focused on better public awareness following the 2008 fatal explosion at the Bayer CropScience facility in Institute and another fatal incident at the DuPont facility in Belle in 2010. “The CSB’s previous recommendations aimed at empowering a government agency to determine just what posed a high hazard,” CSB Chairman Rafael Moure-Eraso told a congressional committee in a February special hearing about the leak.

State gets \$5.6 million to help miners The state received an additional \$5.6 million from the federal government to go toward training and otherwise helping coal miners who’ve recently lost their jobs. Word of the additional funding comes a day after Patriot Coal announced it would cut at least 100 coal mining jobs combined at two of its Boone County mines. “Layoffs and mine closures are frustrating for our miners and their families — they depend on their jobs to keep food on the table and a roof overhead,” Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said in a news release announcing the funding. “This additional funding, combined with the original grant award, will allow us to provide re-employment services and job training opportunities to 700 mine workers.” In 2012 the state received \$1.8 million from the U.S. Department of Labor in the form of National Emergency Grants. The purpose of the grants is to “provide resources to states and local workforce investment boards to quickly reemploy laid-off workers by offering training to increase occupational skills,” according to the labor department’s website. The additional funding will provide for continued training through the end of 2016, according to Tomblin’s press release.

### **WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS**

Commentary: Coal vs. gas Wednesday, Patriot Coal issued the required 60-day notice of planned layoffs at two of its Boone County operations. Just one day earlier, a new company called Moundsville Power announced plans to build a natural gas powered electric generating plant in Marshall County. The timing of the announcements was a coincidence, but it’s significant. Gas is hot; coal is not. The natural gas industry is sinking wells in Marcellus and Utica regions, while

planning continues for a proposed gigantic ethane “cracker” in Wood County. The coal industry, meanwhile, is fighting to maintain its energy sector market share. Whether there is an actual “war on coal” is a semantic debate. It’s more like the old guard energy stalwart is running out of friends. Utilities migrate toward the lowest price and the fewest environmental hassles. Policy makers outside of the coal fields are, at best, ambivalent about the industry, while the greens, with the help of the White House and the EPA, believe they have coal on the ropes. Meanwhile, weak demand for steel and an oversupply of metallurgical coal has made that market tougher as well. Patriot President and CEO Ben Hatfield says the layoffs will come at both steam coal and metallurgical coal operations. “We’re struggling with mines at those locations that are simply operating at cost levels that exceed the prices that we can get at the marketplace,” Hatfield said. “They’re literally consuming cash.”

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## MARYLAND

### **BALTIMORE SUN**

Dr. Torrey C. Brown, state natural resources secretary, dies at 77 Dr. Torrey C. Brown, the former secretary of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources who banned fishing for rockfish, died of heart disease Sunday at Anne Arundel Medical Center. The Severna Park resident was 77. Born in Chicago, he was a graduate of the University of Chicago High School. He earned a degree at Wheaton College and then came to Baltimore, where he received his degree at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Brown remained at Johns Hopkins for further medical training and joined the faculty as an associate professor of medicine in 1974. He worked on the creation of community health centers in East Baltimore. In 1971, he was elected to the House of Delegates from Baltimore — he then lived in the Tuscany-Canterbury neighborhood of North Baltimore. He was among the early members of the New Democratic Club. "It was in 1970, a few months before the first Earth Day, when Torrey Brown, a Johns Hopkins physician, first took his place on the Maryland legislature's Environmental Matters Committee," wrote Baltimore Sun columnist Tom Horton in a 1995 column. "His career has spanned so much of Maryland's environmental coming of age that some of the biggest battles are hardly remembered, he said in an interview a few weeks ago." In 1979, he became the chair of the House Environmental Matters Committee.

Osprey nest moves to new platform The osprey-camera saga continues. With ospreys busily building yet another nest in front of a traffic camera Thursday morning at the Bay Bridge, the Maryland Transportation Authority countered by moving the birds' home to a platform nearby. After having bridge crews remove their nest three times already, the persistent fish hawks had shifted their nest's location from the camera over the eastbound lanes of U.S. 50 to another camera on the opposite side of the busy highway, focused on westbound traffic coming off the bridge. The cameras are part of a network the state has providing motorists real-time updates on traffic. They can be viewed at [chart.state.md.us/travinfo/trafficcams.php#](http://chart.state.md.us/travinfo/trafficcams.php#) The camera with the nest is WPL C-501 AT GANTRY N-1 in the Annapolis area.

Letter: Wind farm not worth the risk Tom Vinson's and Bruce Burcat's arguments ("A wind-win situation," April 21) asking Gov. Martin O'Malley to veto House Bill 1168, which places a

temporary moratorium on the construction of wind turbines in Somerset County, suffers from the misleading arguments often used by promoters of renewable power. First, wind speed on the Chesapeake Bay's Eastern Shore is just adequate for commercial exploitation. The builders constantly refer to 150 megawatts of generation capacity, but this is the maximum or "nameplate" capacity, which is available only when the wind is strong. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's wind maps, the 25 turbines proposed for Somerset County will operate at about 30 percent of the maximum, or 45 MW.

### **ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL -GAZETTE**

Victims of Chesapeake Bay infections help cleanup push Jay Sadowski is done fishing Chesapeake Bay waters. The Easton resident said he is giving up something he has enjoyed for nearly all of his 59 years. Three days after fishing from a charter boat in the bay last fall, Sadowski was rushed to the hospital near his home.

Millenials, though less likely to recycle, commemorate Earth Day As the newest tree at Anne Arundel Community College's Arnold campus takes root, so perhaps will a new spirit of environmentalism. Students from the Student Association on Wednesday planted a tree peppered with pink flowers as part of their annual Earth Day event.\_

### **CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE**

Wicomico River the last stand for Md.'s invasive nutria QUANTICO — On the wall of the nutria eradication team's drab office at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, there's a large whiteboard with names and numbers on it. They're bets for a long-running pool: How many nutria will the team find in the marshes of the Wicomico River? "The people that guessed 90, 70, 120, they've already lost," says Stephen Kendrot as he drives along a Wicomico County back road. It's an overcast April afternoon with a long-awaited bit of warmth in the air. The nutria project leader is coming back from a site in Quantico, where four of his trappers are roaming the Wicomico River in johnboat. They've killed about 120 nutria there so far and found a few more this morning. The river is the site of the final battle in the long-running quest to eradicate the beaver-like rodents ("nutria" means "otter" in Spanish) that have destroyed thousands of acres of the state's wetlands during the past 40 years. It has taken longer than expected — news articles profiled the waning fight in 2011 — but finally, the state is almost free of the invasive rodents.

### **EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT**

Free booklet offers actions to improve Bay water quality CAMBRIDGE — Dorchester's University of Maryland Extension and Dorchester Master Gardeners have published a booklet, "From My Backyard to Our Bay," to provide Dorchester property owners with actions they can take to improve the water quality of Chesapeake Bay. This free booklet should be available at Saturday's event at ACE Hardware in Cambridge and also is available from the Dorchester Extension Office and the office of the Dorchester County Council. Information includes finding out if your property is in the Critical Area, ways to help control runoff including the use of rain barrels and cisterns. Tips for lawn care offers information about how to have a green yard while using best management to protect the environment, including the control of noxious weeds and invasive plants and insect pests. There also are suggestions for protecting shorelines, composting and yard waste, including managing pet waste as well as caring for a well and septic.

### **MARYLAND GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS**

Fort Washington students clean up, discover wildlife at Fort Foote Park for Earth Day A group of fifth-grade students from Indian Queen Elementary School got a little closer to nature than they expected as part of an Earth Day celebration. The students at the Fort Washington school had been gathering beer bottles, cans, discarded food containers and other trash when one of them spotted a blue-and-white lizard in a log. Thinking the lizard was dead, Sebastian Pena-Tauja, 11, of Fort Washington, prodded it with a stick, but the lizard uncurled and ran, said Julian Loreda, 11, of Fort Washington. "And we ran too." For the students, the discovery was just one highlight of a morning spent hiking, learning the history of Fort Foote Park, sketching wildlife and picking up trash in the park as they marked the annual April 22 event celebrated worldwide in an effort to raise environmental awareness. Aundrea McCall, the principal of the school, said about 140 students participated in the Earth Day trip that was intended to show them how the history, science and math they are learning applies in the world outside the classroom.

County throws weight behind push for sewer line in Clarksburg Clarksburg book store owner Pat Darby, and his father before him, have lobbied for 15 years for a sewer line extension to the Clarksburg Historic District that would allow Darby to build a house with store space on his vacant lot fronting Frederick Road. On Friday Darby and some other local business owners gathered in front of the building he leases across from Bennigan's Restaurant to watch County Executive Isiah Leggett and Council President Craig Rice, (D-Germantown), who represents Clarksburg, sign a letter to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, which they hope will nudge the commission further down the road toward extending that line. "Some people say this is just a letter, but it embodies a combined effort of the county executive and County Council," Rice said. "It shows that this is important to us, and that you (WSSC) need to act." The letter asks WSSC to work with county officials and property owners to find an affordable way to bring the sewer extension to the area. Darby said he is ever hopeful something will be done, but he said it's been tried before, and so far, nothing has worked. "I always wish people the best of luck, but I'm somewhat pessimistic this will go forward anytime soon," he said. Property owners in the Historic District straddling Frederick Road (MD 355) want a sewer line extension because it would allow them to develop or redevelop their sites, boosting their property values. Most are now on septic systems.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection May 3 The Charles County Department of Public Works would like to remind citizens that the next household hazardous waste collection will be held on Saturday, May 3. The household hazardous waste collection site is located in the parking lot of the Department of Public Works building, located at 10430 Audie Lane, off of Radio Station Road in La Plata. Collection hours are 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Items accepted free of charge include: pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, oil-based paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, fluorescent lights, mercury thermometers, and other poisons found in the home. Please remember to mark any container that does not have a readable, original label. Unacceptable materials include bio-medical waste (sharps, needles, anything with bodily fluids), expired prescription drugs, and ammunition. Used motor oil, anti-freeze, propane tanks, and batteries are accepted on a regular basis at various collection sites. Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste and can be placed in your household trash as long as it is solidified. This can be accomplished by adding kitty litter, shredded paper, or sawdust to the liquid latex paint to aid in

drying it out.

### **SOUTHERN MARYLAND NEWS**

Southern Maryland's first state parks still stand out Karen Jarboe, 31, camped at Calvert Cliffs State Park as a Girl Scout. She worked part time at the park's entrance gate when she was 16. Today, she is the full-time park ranger there. State parks in Southern Maryland are popular draws, bringing in hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Some of them go camping. Some go fishing. Some go hiking. Some hunt for fossils. But there was a time not too long ago when there were no state parks at all in Southern Maryland. It wasn't until the 1960s that the park system began developing in earnest in the region. Cedarville State Forest on the county line between Charles and Prince George's got its start during the Great Depression under the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. St. Clement's Island in the Potomac River is the landing where Maryland was founded in 1634. Much later, the island would go from a failed waterfront development in the late 19th century to a proving ground and finally a protected state park.

### **CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL**

How to sell chefs on new, Bay-friendly seafood items It's not easy staying up-to-date on the latest, eco-friendliest seafood options — not even for professional chefs. That's why several of them in the Washington, D.C. area attended a luncheon hosted this week by Jessup, Md.-based seafood supplier J.J. McDonnell, which featured everything from farmed cobia to invasive blue catfish from the Chesapeake Bay. "As a business, we have to be more responsible about what we do," George McManus III, owner of J.J. McDonnell, explained to the group at Bobby Van's Steakhouse in D.C. Connor Boney, marketing manager for the seafood supplier, said the company organizes events like this in part to respond to growing demand for more sustainable and local products — and more information about them. "This is a portfolio of what we're doing as a company to source sustainable products and (work with) creative aquaculture," he said before the five-course meal began. "Skinny Dipper" Oysters Rockefeller sourced from a Southern Maryland oyster farm that sells exclusively through J.J. McDonnell started off the meal. With the oyster industry in the Bay watershed booming, J.J. McDonnell's Kurt Friesland explained how difficult it can be to pair up with a promising source in this growing facet of aquaculture.

Pamunkey Indian fish hatchery continues shad restoration efforts Having spent some deck time during my younger years on offshore fishing vessels, I am interested in fish. I am particularly interested in migratory fish. There's something about how fish can travel from one piece of water to another, knowing the unique scent of a river or patch of open ocean by the underwater canyons or currents — how they know "home," from an aquatic perspective. In the 1970s, I learned a bit about these watery excursions from working on a swordfish longliner. When I moved to an upriver and very much inland part of the Bay watershed, another migratory fish captured my interest. What better way, I thought, to connect the Bay, the ocean, and the uplands than through the amazing travels and life cycle of the American shad, *Alosa sapidissima*, or the "most delicious" of all shad, as the name says. So, when I learned that our photojournalist, Dave Harp, was headed to the Pamunkey Fish Hatchery to shoot a story for another Bay Journal writer, I begged to go along. The hatchery was barely an hour from the photo shoot on the Rappahannock River — and I'd never seen a live shad up close and personal.

CBEC Environmentally Speaking May 21, 2014, 7:00pm - 8:00pm, Location: The Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, MD; The Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center is presenting What I Want To Do When I Grow Up, the latest offering in its Environmentally Speaking Lecture Series. Capt. David and Christine O'Neill, who have cruised the world, will talk about how they changed their lifestyles to do what they always wanted to do. Light fare is provided. The cost is \$10. For information, visit [www.bayrestoration.org](http://www.bayrestoration.org).

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## VIRGINIA

### **NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS**

\$326,000: Landfill post-closure care ISLE OF WIGHT — The continued care of a landfill the county closed years ago will cost Isle of Wight \$326,000 next year under the current budget proposal. Don Robertson, a spokesman for the county, said Isle of Wight covered the county's landfill in the early 1990s under a closeout process regulated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. "For landfills, you never close them out completely. There's always going to be maintenance," Robertson said. That ongoing upkeep involves EPA and DEQ standards the county must meet, including ensuring that there is no leakage or runoff containing contaminated materials, Robertson said. The county is also responsible for safely and appropriately dispersing the gases that build up under the landfill cap. The county now belongs to the Southeastern Public Service Authority, which manages waste for localities in southern Hampton Roads using a series of transfer stations and a regional landfill in Suffolk. Robertson said the year-to-year cost of the landfill's post-closure care fluctuates because some maintenance activities are continuous and some are only necessary every few years. The current year's cost for landfill upkeep is \$425,000, nearly three times as much as the previous year's \$150,807. The proposed budget, which is set to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors on May 1, includes \$326,000.

### **ROANOKE TIMES**

Water not tainted by Radford Army Ammunition Plant, study says After a yearlong investigation, a federal agency reported on Wednesday that residents living around the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, ranked as the largest toxic emitter in Virginia, need not worry about finding chemicals in their drinking water. The 103-page report was prepared in response to concerns by several environmental groups which have feared for years that the plant's hazardous waste — the leftovers of making ammunition that were dumped on the plant's sprawling grounds decades ago, before current environmental regulations took effect — may have found its way into the wells of nearby homes. Studies over the years by the Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Quality have found little evidence of contaminated drinking water. Wednesday's report by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, an arm of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, relied heavily on the same data used in previous investigations and again came to the same conclusion.

### **CHARLOTTESVILLE DAILY PROGRESS**

Volunteers focus on care, conservation of Rivanna River watershed Nature-minded volunteers

worked to improve the Rivanna River in a variety of events around Charlottesville last weekend. More than 100 people came together at river cleanups, a buffer planting, water quality monitoring and educational events. The effort to engage the community in river protection and preservation is part of the Rivanna Conservation Society's "Go X-Stream Rivanna River Makeover," a series of events organized around Earth Week. "We want to inform and involve the community in the care and protection of the Rivanna River," said the group's executive director Robbi Savage. "If we get involved, if we care, then the water improves. It is that simple." Volunteers spent a sunny Saturday morning in Charlottesville's Quarry Park planting a protective riparian buffer on the banks of a tributary to Moore's Creek. This spot has been historically considered one of the most contaminated areas of the watershed, but has been the focus of several city cleanups. The group planted trees and native grasses near the stream, which, as they grow, will support native wildlife and prevent soil erosion. Steve Pence, a professional forester and co-founder of the Rivanna Conservation Society, explained why the process of planting trees is the best way to sustain a healthy river ecosystem.\_

### **FREDERICKSBURG FREELANCE STAR**

Roanoke County supervisors likely to cut citizens environmental panel The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday signaled they would likely disband a volunteer citizen advisory committee that for years has focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the promotion of energy conservation. Hobbled by the board's impending decision to remove itself from ICLEI, an environmental organization that provides software and data, four citizen representatives of RCCLEAR met with the board to discuss the future of their work. The Roanoke County Citizen Leaders Environmental Action Roundtable is citizen-led committee that tracks carbon emission data in the region. hat discussion disintegrated quickly, though, as the verbal back-and-forth became heated and politicized. From the get-Tgo, Supervisor Joe McNamara proposed the committee break away from the county to continue its work as a nonprofit entity, Supervisor Jason Peters proposed it completely restructure its role, and Supervisor Al Bedrosian grilled members on the current mission of the group. "You're about pushing man-made global warming, and I don't believe in that," Bedrosian said. "You're not a group that's just here to give ideas. I think you're a group that says, 'Hey, we have a way of thinking, this is the way we think things should be done.' " For months, Bedrosian and a small band of climate change skeptics have spoken out against the county's affiliation with ICLEI, which they have argued to be an arm of the United Nations with aims to diminish people's property rights.\_

### **ASSOCIATED PRESS (VA.)**

No contamination found in water near Radford Army Ammunition Plant RADFORD -- A new report says drinking water around the Radford Army Ammunition Plant isn't contaminated. The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry conducted a yearlong study in response to environmental groups' concerns that hazardous waste dumped decades ago might have gotten into nearby homes' wells.

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### **BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT**

Elk River Symptoms Consistent With Spilled Chemical, Study Finds Hundreds of West Virginia residents who sought emergency treatment following a spill in the Elk River had symptoms consistent with exposure to the main chemical that leaked from above-ground storage tanks, a state-federal study concludes. West Virginia Sen. Manchin says the public health study from the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and the federal Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry is further justification for passage of the Chemical Safety and Drinking Water Protection Act

Texas Family Awarded \$2.9 Million in First Tort Jury Verdict on Fracking Aruba Petroleum must pay \$2.9 million to a Texas family that alleged contamination from the defendant's fracking operations caused them a variety of personal injuries, a jury in Dallas County finds in what sources say is the first toxic tort jury verdict over hydraulic fracturing. The jury finds that Aruba caused an intentional nuisance when it engaged in fracking near the home of Robert Parr, Lisa Parr and Emma Duvall in Decatur, Texas. An attorney for the plaintiffs tells Bloomberg BNA the verdict is likely to have a broad impact on fracking litigation.

### **GREENWIRE**

EPA declined in innovation last year -- study U.S. EPA is one of the more innovative federal agencies but saw its progress slow last year, according to a study released today by the Partnership for Public Service. The partnership, a nonprofit group that researches how to improve the federal government, ranked EPA fifth among large agencies, tying with the Navy. NASA was ranked No. 1 among large agencies, holding onto its crown for the fourth straight year. EPA's "innovation score" was 61.6 points for 2013, a drop of 4.5 points from the prior year. NASA's score was 76 points last year, a decline of 0.5 from 2012. Categorized as a small agency by the partnership, the Surface Transportation Board earned the highest score among all agencies, with 83.9 points. The partnership, along with Deloitte and Hay Group, based its analysis on certain questions from a survey of federal employees used each year for its "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" report. The analysis found that 90 percent of government workers are looking for ways to improve their job performance but only 54.7 percent feel that they are encouraged to do so. In addition, only about a third of federal employees feel their agencies reward innovation on the job. The partnership found the governmentwide innovation score dropped again in 2013 to 59.4 points, a fall of 2.1. That's the lowest score since 2010, when the group began measuring agency innovation, which has fallen year after year. Other agencies in the energy and environmental world saw their innovation scores drop, too. The Interior Department was ranked No. 9 among large agencies with a score of 60.2 for last year, a drop of 3 points from 2012.

State, local officials at odds over health impacts of W.Va. chemical spill A health review released yesterday found that hundreds of West Virginia residents who were treated in January for medical problems exhibited symptoms "consistent" with exposure to MCHM, the chemical that leaked into the area's drinking water supply that month and affected 300,000 people. The review by the state's Department of Health and Human Resources examined medical charts from local hospitals and showed that most residents who sought treatment were exposed through skin contact while bathing, showering or washing hands. The report found significantly less of a health impact than a similar investigation released a day earlier by the Kanawha-Charleston

Health Department, a local agency, which found about 100,000 people likely exhibited symptoms of MCHM exposure, with most of them not seeking medical attention. The state review "grossly underestimates" the reality of the spill, said Kanawha-Charleston Health Department Director Rahul Gupta. State officials dispute that and say most people who visited emergency rooms showed only mild symptoms that required little or no treatment -- a stance that health advocates say is worrisome.

SOLID WASTE: Thrown-out food takes environmental toll Efforts are underway around the world to reduce food waste, a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Such waste often winds up in landfills that emit methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. Food waste creates 3.3 billion tons of greenhouse gases each year, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. British grocery chains have helped the United Kingdom reduce food waste by 21 percent since 2007. In China, an initiative called Operation Clean Plate has helped focus attention on wasted food. About 40 percent of food in the United States is wasted, according to a 2012 report by the Natural Resources Defense Council. In Britain, families discard on average 700 pounds of food each year. "Working on food waste is very sensitive. The idea is not to be intrusive and tell people what to do," said Fanny Demassieux, head of the Responsible Consumption Unit at the U.N. Environment Programme. "It's only to explain to them that, probably, they are wasting more food than they think"

### **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Study links drought, global warming WASHINGTON — While researchers have sometimes connected weather extremes to man-made global warming, usually it's not done in real time. Now a study is asserting a link between climate change and both the intensifying California drought and the polar vortex blamed for a harsh winter that mercifully has just ended in many places. The Utah State University scientists involved in the study say they hope what they found can help them predict the next big weird winter. Outside scientists, such as Katharine Hayhoe at Texas Tech University, are calling this study promising but not quite proven as it pushes the boundaries in "one of the hottest topics in climate science today." The United States just came out of a two-faced winter — bitter cold and snowy in the Midwest and East, warm and severely dry in the West. The latest U.S. drought monitor says 100 percent of California is in an official drought. The new study blames an unusual "dipole," a combination of a strong Western high pressure ridge and deep Great Lakes low pressure trough. That dipole is linked to a recently found precursor to El Nino, the world-weather changing phenomenon. And that precursor itself seems amplified by a build-up of heat-trapping greenhouse gases, the study says. It's like a complex game of weather dominos that starts with cold water off China and ends with a devastating drought and memorable winter in the United States, said study author Simon Wang, a Utah State University climate scientist. Wang was looking at colder water off China as a precursor to an El Nino. The colder water there triggers westerly winds in the tropical Pacific. Those westerly winds persist for several months and eventually push warmed up water and air to the central Pacific where an El Nino forms, Wang said.

### **FORBES**

Why Do People Praise The Costs Of Fracking, Not The Benefits Of Fracking This is one of those economic mistakes that really rather annoys me. People praising whatever plan it is by telling us all how expensive their plan is going to be to bring to fruition. This time it's about

fracking for natural gas in England but it's the same old story, the same mistake that is being made. They're telling us how wonderful it is that all these costs will have to be met in order to frack for natural gas. When what we really want to know is whether these costs will be worth it: what are the benefits to us all of spending all of this money? Fracking could generate a £33bn investment windfall in Britain thanks to the creation of a new industrial supply chain, a report has claimed. Drilling of an estimated 4,000 horizontal shale gas wells over an 18-year period would generate 64,000 new jobs and spur massive investment to serve the industry, according to the UK Onshore Operators Group. Of the £33bn of investment identified within the report, the production of specialised equipment such as pumps trucks and other oil field services needed for hydraulic fracturing will require £17bn of investment. Think it through for a moment, what they're actually saying is that we'll have to take £33 billion that we could invest elsewhere and instead we'll have to spend it on machines to drill holes in the ground and on drilling holes in the ground. Instead of spending that money on curing malaria or creating an actually drinkable bottle of English wine or French beer. Investing £33 billion in fracking for natural gas is a cost of attempting to produce natural gas, not a benefit of our doing so. Similarly, I know we all think of "creating jobs" as being a good idea but they're still a cost. Of course a job is a cost to the employer: she's the person who has to cut the paycheck each month. And while it's nice that people have jobs a job is still a cost to the worker: it's the work they've got to go and do in order to gain the benefit of an income which is what he's really after. Another way of saying the same thing is that wages are the bribe that have to be paid to us to cover the costs to us of our doing some work. And to society as a whole a job is a cost too: for it means that those rough men drilling holes in our green and verdant countryside are not, instead, drilling holes to take away our sewage, or being rough men in that night to defend us.